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Written statement* submitted by the Amuta for NGO Responsibility, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[16 February 2015]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

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Irresponsible European Government NGO Funding Exploits International Law to Promote Conflict and Hate

The governments of Switzerland, Denmark, Sweden, and the Netherlands are providing millions of dollars in funding to Israeli and Palestinian political advocacy NGOs (non-governmental organizations) active in the Israeli-Arab conflict, via the Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law Secretariat (the "Secretariat").[1] The funds are managed by the Institute of Law at Birzeit University and NIRAS, a European multidisciplinary consulting company.

In March 2014, the Secretariat announced[2] $10.5 million in "core funding" grants, over three years, for 24 highly politicized Israeli and Palestinian NGOs. Many of the recipients promote anti-Israel BDS (boycott, divestment, and sanctions), advance a "1948 agenda" that portray the re-establishment of Jewish sovereign equality as a "catastrophe," and exploit the false "apartheid" analogy to demonize Israel. Some of these NGOs also promote blatant anti-Jewish hatred and bigotry.

In addition, on August 2, 2014, the Secretariat pledged "emergency funding" to nine NGOs to target Israel with false charges of "war crimes", while ignoring Hamas violations of law, including 4563 rockets fired at Israel – each one a war crime. . Explicitly, the documentation and investigation of deliberate Palestinian attacks on Israeli civilians is not a focus of the funding objective. The taxpayer money from these four countries is used to advance politicized and biased investigations of Israel, such as the discredited Schabas Commission of Inquiry, and to exploit the International Criminal Court.

The Secretariat's partnership with Birzeit University is also troubling. According to news reports, Birzeit University has a policy "stipulating that Jewish Israelis are not allowed on the university grounds."[3] Birzeit University issued a statement[4] that confirmed and justified this discriminating against people based on religion and country of origin "according to our national interests and cause." Various faculty members have also confirmed the policy.

Furthermore, in February 2014, Birzeit published a report, "Advocating for Palestinian Rights in conformity with International Law: Guidelines"[5] (English and Arabic). This document is a strategic manual for exploiting legal terms and rhetoric to demonize and isolate Israel internationally, and promotes the elimination of the State of Israel via statements that Israel, regardless of its borders, is among "racist regimes which are absolutely prohibited in their entirety." The report was posted prominently on the Secretariat's Facebook page.[6]

Secretariat leadership has openly espoused these views. Mustafa Mari, who currently manages the Secretariat and is the Curriculum Development Officer at Birzeit, chaired a session where participants discussed Israel's "colonial policy that dated back at least to the 1930s" and the "need for new legal frameworks which make the occupation illegal, criminalize Israeli practices, and support unification of Palestine and Palestinians." The session took place at the conference that became the basis for the aforementioned report.

Many of the NGOs funded by the Secretariat promote anti-Jewish racism, deliberate attacks on Israeli civilians under the guise of "resistance," and the elimination of Jewish self-determination. For instance,

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[1] http://www.rightsecretariat.ps/index.php
[2] http://www.rightsecretariat.ps/our-work/grantees/project-funding
[3] http://www.haaretz.com/news/features/.premium-1.618007
[4] https://twitter.com/BirzeitUniv/status/516543950593597441
[5] http://lawcenter.birzeit.edu/iol/en/project/outputfile/6/986afcc6c9.pdf
[6] https://www.facebook.com/HRIHLSecretariat

BADIL, a Palestinian NGO founded to promote a Palestinian "right of return" and a leader of international BDS campaigns. BADIL has published antisemitic cartoons on its website,[7] as well as imagery promoting violence, and a one-state agenda denying Israel's right to exist. A cartoon that won a monetary prize in BADIL's 2010 Al-Awda Nakba caricature competition is a blatant representation of classic antisemitic tropes: a Jewish man garbed in traditional Hasidic attire – featuring a hooked nose and side locks – stands above a dead child and skulls, while holding a pitchfork dripping with blood. After this and other antisemitic images were revealed Switzerland froze its contribution[8] to Secretariat funding for BADIL. This funding was renewed, however, by Switzerland, Denmark, the Netherlands, and Sweden, even though there is no available public documentation showing that an independent investigation was conducted regarding BADIL's explicit promotion of antisemitic materials, or that mechanisms to prevent future antisemitic occurrences were instituted. Indeed, much of the offensive imagery remains on BADIL's website.[9]

Palestinian Center for Human Rights (PCHR), a leader in the anti-Israel "lawfare" movement that attempts to have Israelis arrested on invented war crimes charges in various countries. PCHR's cases have all been dismissed in the preliminary stages. Despite claiming to advance "human rights", PCHR fails to condemn deliberate attacks on Israeli civilians, promoting an invented and illegal "right of resistance" by Palestinian terror groups. The group regularly employs highly offensive rhetoric describing Israel's policies as "apartheid," "ethnic cleansing," "war crimes," and the "Judaization of Jerusalem."

Al Haq, a leader in BDS and "lawfare" campaigns, has suggested activists sabotage the Israeli judicial system by "flooding the [Israeli Supreme] Court with petitions in the hope of obstructing its functioning and resources." The Israeli Supreme Court has identified Al Haq's general director Shawan Jabarin as "among the senior activists of the Popular Front terrorist organization" (PFLP). Although the PFLP is a designated terrorist organization by the EU, there is no record indicating that due diligence was conducted to ensure that Secretariat funding to Al Haq is not diverted in violation of domestic and international terror financing laws.

MIFTAH, a group that claims to "disseminate the Palestinian narrative," "influence policy and legislation," and "achieve a more supportive policy environment for reform and democratization in Palestine." Instead the group has published antisemitic materials and praised suicide bombers. In March 2013, MIFTAH published an article written by Nawaf al-Zaru that repeated the antisemitic blood libel that Jews use Christian blood to bake Passover matzo.[10] After significant public criticism, MIFTAH removed the article, but attacked the blogger who exposed the article for "smearing" the organization and downplayed the centrality of the blood libel in the piece.[11] Miftah's publications utilize the term "resistance fighters" to describe terror groups, and described Wafa Idrees, one of the first female Palestinian suicide bombers, as "the beginning of a string of Palestinian women dedicated to sacrificing their lives for the cause." Idrees detonated herself on January 27, 2002, killing 81 year-old Pinhas Takatli and injuring 150 Israeli civilians.

Stop the Wall, a leader of the international BDS campaign, received a Secretariat grant ostensibly to "contribute to a situation of accountability and respect for human rights by all duty bearers by creating mechanisms to implement ICJ decisions related to the separation Wall." Stop the Wall claims[12] that "The Wall is an integral part of the Zionist project to remove Palestinians from Palestine," and considers "The Wall to be an integral part of the racist ambitions of Zionism" and "Israel's occupation, colonialism and apartheid" policies. This view disregards Israeli "right to life" by ignoring the fact that the security barrier was only built in response to suicide bombings targeting civilians emanating from the West Bank and has saved countless lives since its construction. The inflammatory and offensive rhetoric employed by Stop the Wall is a form of incitement and does not contribute to co-existence or peace.

These NGOs, along with others that receive Secretariat funding, issue lengthy publications accusing Israel of war crimes and other demonizing allegations. Measures such as universal jurisdiction lawsuits, boycott campaigns, and

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[7] http://www.ngo-monitor.org/article/badil_s_antisemitic_cartoon_questions_for_danchurchaid_trocaire_and_funders
[8] http://www.jpost.com/International/Swiss-freeze-funds-for-pro-Palestinian-NGO
[9] http://www.badil.org/en/photo-gallery/category/226-awdaaward-caricatures-10
[10] http://www.ngo-monitor.org/data/images/File/miftah%20blood%20libel.jpg
[11] http://www.miftah.org/Display.cfm?DocId=25950&CategoryID=2
[12] http://www.stopthewall.org/about-us

lobbying for ICC prosecutions are never wielded against Palestinians for their commission and support of terrorism, kidnapping, and murders of Israelis, nor for Hamas' calls for genocide against the Jewish people.

The exploitation of human rights rhetoric and the abuse of legal systems by these NGOs is a divisive tactic that enflames the rhetoric of hate instead of facilitating constructive solutions to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Funding from Sweden, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and Denmark for these activities is immoral and an improper use of taxpayer funding. The Secretariat should be immediately disbanded and government officials should launch an immediate investigation into how the Secretariat framework was exploited to promote conflict and hate.